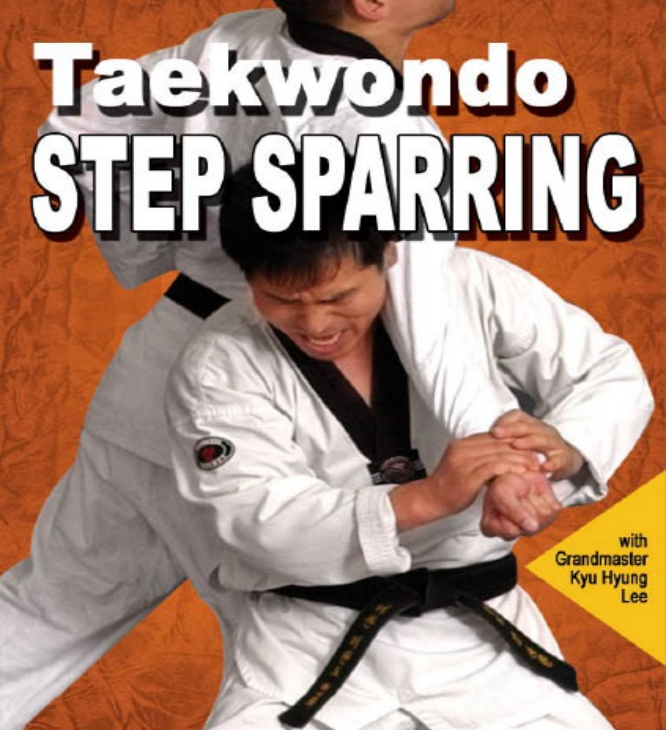
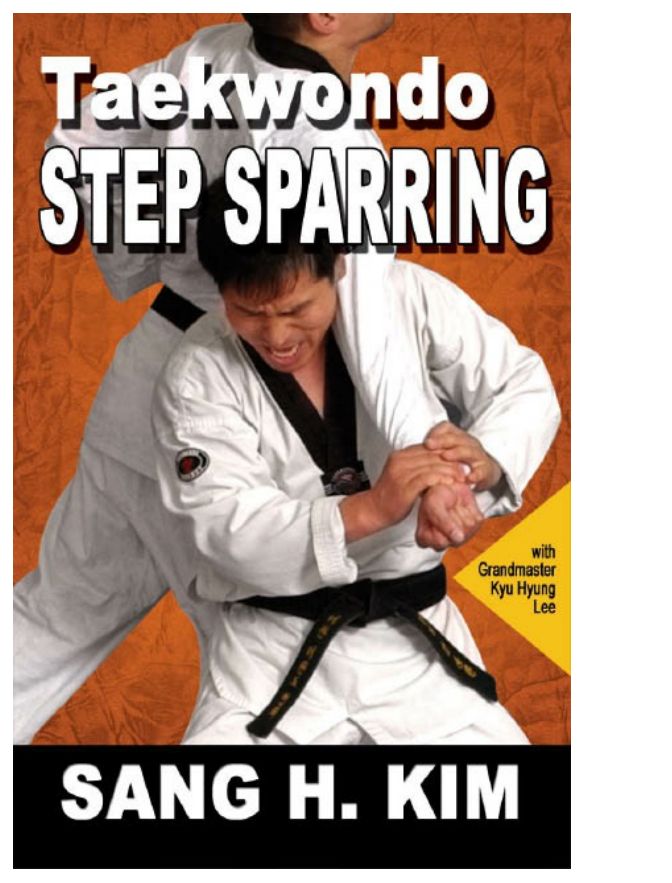




Taekwondo STEP SPARRING

with
Grandmaster
Kyu Hyung
Lee

SANG H. KIM



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STEP SPARRING FUNDAMENTALS

What is Step Sparring?

Step sparring is a form of drill training used by Taekwondo students to practice and perfect basic stances, blocks, strikes and kicks with a partner. It includes one-step, two-step and three-step sparring, which are characterized by the number of steps forward that the attacker takes at the beginning of the technique.

Because step sparring is a series of

arranged movements, it is a good way to perfect your technical execution of basic movements through repetitious practice with a partner. It helps you develop distance control, timing, accuracy, self-control, respect toward your partner and teamwork.

At the advanced level, step sparring sets become longer and more complex, helping you develop coordination, speed and fluidity.

You can use sparring or self-defense skills or a mix of both in step sparring. Depending on the type of skills you are practicing, you may begin from ready stance or fighting

stance. However, step sparring techniques should not be confused with sparring or self-defense techniques.

Begin from ready stance.



Begin from fighting stance.



Goals of Step Sparring

1. Foundation skill development
2. Offensive and defensive skill integration
3. Technical perfection
4. Distance control
5. Timing and coordination
6. Speed and fluidity

Key Components

Step sparring is an excellent way for beginning and intermediate students to learn the basics of Taekwondo, including fundamental blocks, punches and kicks, used in free sparring and self-defense.

Control

Step sparring helps you learn how to control the distance, speed and power of your movements by practicing in a light or non-contact situation. This sense of control is critical for safety and technical perfection in sparring and self-defense practice in the dojang

(school). Drilling in the form of step sparring is also a good way to reduce the fear of being injured during partner practice.

Sense of Distance

An accurate sense of distance and spatial awareness is essential to developing self-defense and sparring skills. By repetitively practicing movements with a partner, you learn the exact range and angles of your kicks, punches and blocks. This knowledge can then be applied to developing accurate striking distances for free sparring.

Timing

Once a step sparring set is learned, you anticipate what attack is coming and can accurately calculate how to correctly time your defense. Through repetition, you will develop an innate sense of defensive timing.

Speed and Fluidity

As step sparring skills progress in difficulty, they become more complex and require you to perform up to a half dozen movements in a quick combination. This develops both the speed of the individual movements and the fluidity of the transitions between combination movements.

Training TIPS

Create a smooth transition between the block and punch when you are the attacking partner.

Use light contact when blocking or parrying.

When striking or kicking, come as close as possible to your partner without hitting him or her.

If a lock is part of the sequence, the partner on the receiving end of the locking technique should tap when he or she feels pain.

Perfect technical execution of the techniques first, then increase speed.

When the attacker punches, the purpose of the defender's initial block is to redirect the line of the punch away from the center line and create

an opening for the counterattack.

Etiquette

Every type of Taekwondo practice has its own rules of etiquette and step sparring is no exception. When practicing with a partner, follow these etiquette guidelines at the beginning and end of practice. Etiquette in the dojang is the foundation for character building.

Beginning Etiquette

1. Face each other in attention (charyut) stance.



2. Bow to each other at the instructor's command or when you are ready.



3. Step your left foot to the left into ready (choonbee) stance.



Ending Etiquette

1. Return to ready stance after your last technique.



2. Move your left foot into attention stance.



3. Bow to each other.



Partner Practice Etiquette

Partners should work at the same

skill and intensity level. Practice should be challenging but not exhausting or painful.

Agree on an appropriate level of contact prior to beginning.

Spend extra time to work on each partner's weak areas.

React realistically but be cooperative—step sparring is a learning experience, not a competition.

How to Practice

Although step sparring techniques can vary in complexity from basic to advanced, all techniques are practiced in fundamentally the same

way. Step sparring models a typical sparring or self-defense situation in which one person attacks and the other responds with a defense and counterattack. Two people face each other at about arms' distance. They then take turns performing the roles of attacker and defender so that each can practice both offensive and defensive skills. The attacker initiates the technique, either on his own initiation or according to an instructor's count. The defender responds by blocking, evading or redirecting the attack and then counterattacks with strikes and/or kicks.

Ready Stance Start

To begin from ready stance, face your partner in parallel ready (choonbee) stance. To find the correct distance, you and your partner should extend your arms straight out in front of yourselves with your hands held in fists. When the front of the fists just touch, this is the correct starting distance.

Once the correct distance has been established, the attacker steps back into left front stance and executes a left low block. The defender signals his readiness with a kihap (shout) and then the attacker steps forward into right front stance, executing a

right middle punch. As the attacker punches, the defender simultaneously begins his defensive set of movements.

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker (left): Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



Fighting Stance Start

To begin from fighting stance, face your partner in fighting stance at a neutral sparring distance. When you are ready or when an instructor gives a signal, the attacker throws a predetermined kick and the defender simultaneously responds with predetermined defensive movements.

1. Face each other in fighting stance.



2. The attacker (left) executes a right leg kick while the defender begins the defensive sequence.



Training TIPS

ETIQUETTE:

When you begin step sparring practice with a new partner, face each other in attention stance and then bow.

After bowing, assume your ready or fighting stance.

Begin the technique on your instructor's signal or when you are ready.

The attacker should only attack after the defender signals his readiness with a kihap (shout).

When the technique is complete, both partners return to their starting stances.

Progression of Practice

Step sparring is a form of progressive drill practice. The way you practice a new step sparring combination when first learning it is different from the way you will practice it after six months or one year of practice. This is why you will continue to practice the same step sparring techniques well into the black belt curriculum. Here are some progressive practice guidelines.

Stage 1: Technical Accuracy

When you first begin practicing a step sparring technique, separate the movements of the combination into discrete steps as shown in the instructional photos and practice each movement slowly with attention to stance, hand placement, and distance control.

Stage 2: One Flow

When you feel comfortable with the basic execution of the movements, begin to assemble them into a smooth flowing combination. Feel how the individual techniques fit together and try to make your transitions between movements as economical as possible. Practice with

a focus on total body coordination, weight transfer in your stances and the flow of power through the combination.

Stage 3: Speed and Power

At the advanced level, your goal is to complete the defense and counterattack in the same time that it takes the attacker to complete his punch. Advanced students can perform as many as a half dozen parries, blocks or counter strikes within one second. At this stage, practice with the goal of removing every millisecond of wasted

movement from your techniques as you increase your speed, control and power.

Here is an example of how to practice this intermediate level step sparring technique progressively:

Stage 1:

Begin by practicing the following steps separately. Your partner cooperates by keeping his punching arm extending as shown until you complete the series of movements. Completion time: up to 5 seconds.





Stage 2:

Begin moving as soon as your partner begins stepping toward you and meet his punch by smoothly linking together the three successive techniques into a single flowing movement. Your partner can react more realistically by withdrawing his punching arm if you do not complete the combination in time. Completion

time: up to 2 seconds.

Stage 3:

At this stage, you should be able to complete all three steps before your partner fully extends his punching arm. Your stances and strikes may be less rigid than depicted in the photos, however you should not sacrifice technical accuracy to gain speed. Completion time: no more than 1 second.

SKILLS REFERENCE

Step Sparring Skills

The step sparring skills in this book consist of basic and intermediate level Taekwondo skills, which most Taekwondo students should be familiar with. However, because skills can be named or taught differently in different schools, this section has been included as a reference to the performance of each skill as it should be done for step sparring.

Types of Skills

The skills in this reference section are grouped by type:

Stances

Blocks

Strikes

Kicks

Footwork

Other skills

Within each section, individual skills are presented in the order in which they first appear in the step sparring techniques.

Skill Adaptation

Be Flexible: As you practice, keep in mind that step sparring movements

are less rigid and well defined than when the same movements are used in poomsae (form) practice.

Adapt: You should adapt the traditional movement structure according to the height and skill level of your partner as well as the angle and distance of attack.

Apply: As in self-defense and sparring practice, you will find that you need to vary how you apply each technique according to the partner you are practicing with. This type of adaptation practice is good preparation for the more fluid and ever changing situations that you will face in free sparring and self-defense.

Traditional: Notice how the partners above are similar in height and their stances are moderate in length. This is an example of a classical attack and defense posture.



Adapted: Here, the attacker is taller than the defender, so the defender has shortened his stance, while the attacker has lengthened his stance to equalize their height difference. This type of short stance can also be used

when your partner punches quickly or steps too close to you.



Stances

Ready Stance

From attention stance (feet together), shift your weight to your right leg while raising your hands to your solar plexus and slowly rolling your fists so the back of the fists face

downward. Next, step your left leg one foot to the left so that your feet are parallel and about one foot apart while rotating your fists as you lower them in front of your abdomen.

When the stance is completed, your feet are about one foot apart and parallel to each other, your legs are straight and your fists are in front of your lower abdomen, with the backs of your hands facing forward. Look at your partner.





Front Stance

To perform left front stance (above), step forward a distance of 1.5 steps with the left leg. Bend your left knee so that your left knee is just over your left toes. Your right heel should

be angled about 30° inward and your right knee should be straight. Rotate your shoulders about 30° to the right and keep your torso upright.

In step sparring, front stance is generally used with low block, middle punch, and high punch. A modified form of front stance can be used with knifehand strikes and blocks.





Back Stance

To perform left back stance (above), step backward a distance of 1 step with the left leg. Your right knee and toes face forward and your left knee and toes face 90° to the left. Bend

your knees as shown above and place about 2/3 of your weight on your left leg. Rotate your torso and hips so that they are on the same plane as your right leg.

In step sparring, back stance is primarily used by the defender to execute inside blocks with the fist or knifehand. In most cases, the defender will step back into back stance while performing the block. Tactically, back stance is a transitional posture for counterattacking. From back stance, you can kick with the front leg, spin to the rear to kick or strike, or shift your weight forward and strike with

the rear hand.





Horseriding Stance

From ready stance, shift your weight to your right leg and step your left leg about two feet to the left. Your feet should be parallel and your knees bent so that your knees are

over your toes. Square your hip and shoulders to the front. Stick your hip out slight to the rear so that your back has a slight arch to promote good balance. Tense your lower abdomen to concentrate your power.

In step sparring, horseriding stance can be used for blocking or striking. In many cases, a modified horseriding stance is formed by shifting your weight more to one side to facilitate the correct distance and angle of a technique. It may also be necessary to lower your stance further by widening the distance between your feet.





Fighting Stance

FEET: Position your feet about 1 ½ steps apart. Turn your front foot about 15° inward and your rear foot outward 45°- 90° depending on what type of technique you will execute.

HANDS: Hold your fists between shoulder and chest height, with your elbows bent.

POSTURE: Bend your knees slightly, relax your shoulders and angle your body to minimize exposure of your centerline.



Fighting Stance - Closed

In closed stance, you and your partner are in the same stance, either right fighting stance (left foot forward) or left fighting stance (right foot forward).

In closed stance, the most effective kicks are front leg pushing kick, front leg roundhouse kick, back leg axe kick and back leg back kick.

You can change to open stance by stepping backward or switching stance in place.



Fighting Stance - Open

Open stance means that you and your partner are in opposite stances. For example, you are in right fighting stance and your partner is in left fighting stance.

Open stance is advantageous if you know how to make the most of it.

Initiative is the key to capitalizing on open targets.

Your best options include attacking with back leg roundhouse kick or axe kick or front leg side kick.

Defensively, sliding straight backward or 45° backward or sideways can be used to create space or evade an attack.



Which Stance?

The choice of open or closed stance is as much a matter of preference as strategy.

Most people prefer closed stance because they feel that their vital targets are less exposed than in open stance.

On the other hand, some people use open stance to lure an opponent into attacking a seemingly open centerline targets and then counterattacking.

Blocks

Low Block

Low block is done with the outer forearm using the twisting motion of the torso. Begin with your arm and fist chambered in front of your opposite shoulder and snap your arm across your body while turning your torso into the block. At completion, your blocking arm is slightly bent to

prevent injuries (avoid locking your elbow).

In step sparring, low block is one of the most basic and commonly used techniques. It is used by the attacker to begin techniques from ready stance. The defender can also use low block to defend against mid- or low-section kicks or hand attacks. Low block is mostly used in front stance or fighting stance. For sparring style step sparring techniques, it is often employed simultaneously with rear middle section punching.





Palm Pressing Block

Palm pressing block begins at shoulder height on the same side as the blocking arm. Keeping your elbow bent, use the movement of your torso to pivot your palm into the

block as you create a pulling force by bringing your other hand to your waist. Palm pressing block can be done horizontally at mid-section or diagonally downward at waist height.

Palm pressing block is a safe, easy alternative to forearm blocking, so it is frequently used in step sparring to allow for a moderate level of contact without pain. It is often used to press your partner's arm away from your centerline, creating an opening for a counterattack. It can also be used offensively to strike the elbow or knee joint at the advanced level.





Outside Knifehand Block

Outside knifehand block travels in a circular motion across the body, ending on the outside line of your body at head height. Use the outer forearm or knife edge of the hand to

block depending on the height of the attacking technique. Turn your body 30° to 60° away from the blocking side, to protect your centerline and create space for a counterattack. When you transition into this block, be sure to cross your arms over your centerline for additional protection.

In step sparring, the outside knifehand block is very versatile in application. It can be used as a front or rear hand block, while moving forward or backward, and from front, back or horseriding stance. Because the hand is fully extended, knifehand block offers a greater blocking surface than other techniques,

making it easy to apply.





High Block

High block begins from the opposite side waist and crosses your body diagonally upward, ending with your fist about 1 fist distance above your head and your elbow just outside your shoulder line. Your palm faces

forward and your forearm is angled to deflect the force of the attacker's strike. Your torso is angled about 30° to the rear.

In step sparring, high block is used to deflect high section attacks like high punch, knifehand strike to the head or axe kick. Due to the added force of gravity inherent in downward strikes or kicks, the amount of force that must be absorbed by high block is greater than for other horizontal-type blocks. Therefore, at the moment of impact, remember to twist your forearm quickly outward and to keep your forearm angled to diffuse the force of the blow. Use

caution!





Inside Knifehand Block

Inside knifehand block begins with your blocking hand drawn back at shoulder height on the blocking side and your elbow bent close to your body. Your other arm is extended in front of you (like middle punch

position) to create additional twisting force. To block, rotate your torso into the block while twisting your knifehand 180° into the target and pulling your other fist to your waist. You can use your wrist or mid-forearm to block, depending on the height and proximity of the attack.

In step sparring, inside knifehand block is generally used in back stance while moving backward to evade the forward movement of your partner. Block beyond the centerline to deflect the incoming attack away from your face and vital targets.





Inside Middle Block

Inside middle block is performed in a similar way to inside knifehand block, except that hand is held in a closed fist. When completed, the blocking hand is just above shoulder height and the torso is angled about 45°

away from the centerline. Because your fist is clenched, inside middle block is more forceful than inside knifehand block.

In step sparring, inside middle block is used as a combination defensive/offensive technique by striking the vital area of the attacker's arm such as the wrist or soft part of the forearm, while blocking. It is generally used in back stance, while moving away from an oncoming attack. Whenever you are executing a bone-to-bone block, such as inside middle block against middle punch, use control and caution so you do not injure yourself or your

partner.





Strikes

Middle Punch

The power of middle punch comes from torso rotation. To begin, pull your punching fist to your waist while rotating your body away from the

centerline. To punch, rotate your torso into the punch as your fist travels on a straight path to the target. Just before the moment of impact, twist your fist into the target and load your body weight into the punch by transferring the weight of your body through your arm into your fist.

Middle punch can be done in-place, moving forward, moving backward, or with a side or diagonal step. In step sparring, it is generally used with horseriding, front, side or fighting stance. Punch to the solar plexus, rib cage or sternum after a block or parry creates an opening.





Elbow Strike

To begin the basic horizontal elbow strike, bend your elbow as tightly as possible and bring your fist in front of your shoulder (same side). Rotate your body and throw your elbow

strike in an inward arcing motion to the target. Strike the target with the forearm side of the elbow.

In step sparring, the elbow is used to strike the rib cage, neck or head as a finishing or transitional technique. Because of its short reach, the elbow is used at very close distances. In addition to the basic horizontal elbow strike, you can use the reverse elbow strike which travels in the opposite (outward) direction.





Knifehand Strike

Knifehand strike is executed by drawing your hand back to your same side shoulder and then rotating your torso into the strike as your knifehand travels on a straight path

to the target. The power of knifehand strike comes from the snapping twist just before the moment of impact. Strike the target with the soft part of the knife blade area.

In step sparring, the knifehand strike is used to strike vertically exposed targets such as the neck (carotid artery), jaw, nose, temple, or rib cage. By striking a vertical target at a horizontal or diagonal angle, the knifehand strike can penetrate narrow target areas with a focused impact.





Backfist Strike

The backfist starts from under the opposite armpit (with the palm facing down) and arcs forward into the target. Strike with the back side of

the first two knuckles at about a 45° angle. Avoid overextending the elbow on impact.

In step sparring, backfist is used as a surprise counterattack against an advancing opponent. At close distance, it can be used to finish a combination by reaching over the attacking technique (like middle punch) to strike a vital target on the head or neck. Generally, the backfist is used against soft targets like the nose, neck or eye.





Rear Elbow Strike

The rear elbow strike can be thrown in a single handed (shown above) or augmented fashion. Begin with the arm outstretched to the front, palm

up. Snap your arm backward from the shoulder as you forcefully fold your elbow (as it passes your torso) in one smooth sequence. Strike the target with the tip of your elbow.

In step sparring, the rear elbow strike is used to strike your partner when he or she is behind you at close distance. It can also be used as a spinning strike. The primary targets are the rib cage, solar plexus or kidneys.



Augmentation

An augmented strike is one that uses the non-striking hand to buttress the striking arm. Generally, you use your palm to reinforce the fist of the

striking arm, creating additional power by using two arms instead of just one.

The purpose of augmenting a strike is to create stability and precision while penetrating more deeply into the target.

By adding the augmenting arm, you create a force framework that rotates around your central axis, making it difficult for an opponent to disrupt.

Augmented strikes work well in close quarters because they are powerfully compact.

Side Elbow Strike

The side elbow strike can be thrown a single handed or augmented (shown above) fashion. To begin, chamber your arm across your opposite shoulder then quickly thrust your elbow, across your body, into the target. For a high section strike, turn your fist with the palm downward. For a middle section strike, turn your fist with your palm upward.

The augmented side elbow strike is the most powerful elbow strike. In step sparring, depending on how you orientate yourself to your partner's position, you can use the side elbow strike against targets on the side or

rear of your partner.





Ridge Knifehand Strike

To begin the ridge knifehand strike, chamber your hand with the palm up, at your waist. As you rotate your body into the strike, your ridge hand

travels up in a circular motion as your palm turns over. For targets that are further away, you can rotate your body more and turn your shoulder over slightly to gain distance. Strike with the upper thumb knuckle area.

Ridge knifehand strike is rarely used because the striking surface is vulnerable to injury, unless you condition your hands properly. In step sparring, it is mostly used as a surprise attack that approaches the target from an unexpected angle or blind spot. It also has greater reach than a traditional knifehand strike.





Palm Strike

Palm strike is a compact strike that is chambered at the same side shoulder with the elbow bent. Snap the palm forward into the target while simultaneously rotating your torso.

Strike with the palm heel of your hand, while holding your fingers tightly together. Avoid slapping the target; instead transfer the rotational acceleration force of your entire body into the target.

In step sparring, the target for the palm strike is usually the elbow or inner forearm of the punching arm. The difference between palm strike and knifehand strike is that palm strike impacts a broader area allowing you to attack bony targets without injuring yourself.





Kicks

Front Kick

Chamber the front kick with your ankle next to your standing knee and your kicking knee pointed at the

target.



Strike with the ball of the foot for power. For speed or kicking soft targets such as the groin, strike with the instep. After kicking, immediately withdraw your leg.





In step sparring, front kick is generally used as a follow up technique to blocking. It can be thrown straight ahead (groin, solar plexus, neck) or from an angle after a side step (rib cage, thigh, knee). To increase the impact of your kick

and control the opponent, you can grab his wrist or sleeve and pull his arm toward you while kicking the rib cage from the side.

Roundhouse Kick

The roundhouse kick is chambered like front kick, however when you begin to extend your leg, pivot on your standing foot as your hip and kicking leg turn over to 30° to 90° depending on the target.



Strike with the ball or instep of the foot. After kicking, withdraw your leg on the same path.





Roundhouse kick is the most diversely applicable kick in step sparring. It can be thrown to low, middle or high section targets with the front or back leg from any stance or angle. It is most effective when used in combinations or as a quick

counterattack. High section roundhouse kick is often used as a finishing technique and low section roundhouse kick can be used as a sweep or takedown.

Side Kick

Chamber the side kick with your foot next to your standing knee and your body turned perpendicular to the target.



Strike with the bottom of the foot or the blade of the foot. After kicking, immediately withdraw your leg to the chambered position or the starting position, depending on your follow-up technique.





The side kick is a power kick. It can be used as a pushing kick to create distance or stop an incoming opponent, or it can be used as a penetrating strike. Because you turn your body to the side and create a lot of distance between your vital targets and the opponent, it is a

relatively safe kick. The primary targets are the knee, thigh, rib cage and solar plexus. If you are flexible, you can also use the side kick on high section targets.

Front Push Kick

The front push kick is chambered higher than regular front kick. Slightly bend your standing knee while raising your kicking knee to waist height and pulling your toes back to expose the sole of your foot. Keep your upper body slightly forward and tuck your chin to collect your balance and force. To kick, push the bottom of your foot into the target, extending your leg and hips into the

kick.





In step sparring, front pushing kick is used to break the structure of your partner's body, prevent a counterattack or expose a target to your follow-up technique. When you kick, follow the path of the kick with your whole body to create maximum power and effect, then immediately

follow up with another technique.

Outside Crescent Kick

Outside crescent kick is chambered at an inward angle, with the toes pointed downward and your thigh parallel to the floor.



As you raise your leg, it travels upward and outward across the

target. At the height of the kick, snap it straight down or outward, depending on the target's position and angle.



Drop your leg into fighting stance after kicking. Strike with the ball or heel of the foot.



In step sparring, outside crescent kick is used to stop an incoming opponent or strike a lateral target such as the face or head. It is a good counterattack to a low or middle section strike, because you can use your leg to sweep away the striking arm or block the completion of the

technique. Your leg is like a shield and your foot is like a sword in this kick.

Inside Crescent Kick

For the inside crescent kick, chamber the leg with your knee at waist height and your foot relaxed.



Sweep the leg upward and inward

across your body in an arcing motion, striking with the bottom of the foot or the heel. You can strike straight downward (like axe kick) or across the target. After kicking, drop your leg into fighting stance.





In step sparring, inside crescent kick is usually used after side stepping. Move off your partner's centerline and then attack inward from an outside position. It can also be used to block a linear strike to your centerline, like a middle punch or

knifehand thrust.

Axe Kick

Axe kick is chambered like front kick, with the ankle next to the standing knee and the kicking knee pointing at the target, however, the chamber in axe kick is very transitional.



To kick, bring your foot as high as possible over your head and then drop it onto the target while pulling your upper body slightly backward away from the kick. Strike with the ball, bottom or heel of the foot. Drop your leg into fighting stance after kicking.



In step sparring, axe kick is used when your partner is moving toward you. It has to be delivered quickly and you need to be quite flexible to raise your leg in the space available as your opponent approaches. It can also be used to threaten an opponent

and create distance for a combination.

Whip Kick

For whip kick, chamber the leg with your knee at waist height and your leg nearly perpendicular to the floor.



Bring your foot across your body and then snap it back across to your rear end. Strike with the bottom of the

foot or heel. After kicking, briefly rechamber the leg before returning to fighting stance.





In step sparring, whip kick is used for counterattacking against a lunging partner or to reach over your partner's middle section strike and counter strike his head. Whip kick should be fast but light and you should use absolute control to

maintain your balance and avoid injuring your partner.

Jumping Double Roundhouse Kick

Jumping double roundhouse kick is a combination of two roundhouse kicks in quick succession. First, throw a short front leg roundhouse kick (kick #1) then before your kicking foot touches the ground, throw a second roundhouse kick (kick #2) with full commitment. The first kick is to establish your balance in the air and close the distance with your partner. The second kick should deliver your full body weight and power to the

target. The first kick is low- to mid-section and the second is mid- to high-section.





In step sparring, jumping double roundhouse kick is used to take advantage of an overcommitted partner who has thrown a technique with too much power or to chase a retreating partner.

Back Kick

First, turn your body and spot the target over your shoulder, then chamber your leg with your knee facing away from the target and your foot facing the target. Your legs should be close together while chambering.



To kick, stretch your leg to the rear

with your toes lower than your heel. Avoid exposing the front of your torso to your opponent. Strike with the bottom or blade of the foot. You can return on the same path or drop your foot in front of you and follow with another kick.





In step sparring, back kick is most commonly used as a counterattack to roundhouse kick. It can also be used as a surprise attack from closed stance to a middle section target.

Spinning Whip Kick

For spinning whip kick, pivot your body to the rear and spot the target over your shoulder, then chamber the leg with your knee at waist height and your leg nearly perpendicular to the floor.





Using your spinning momentum, release your leg across your body and snap it to your rear end. Strike with the bottom of the foot or heel. Control your upper body so that your standing leg becomes the axis of your turn while your upper body and kicking leg rotate around it. After kicking, return your foot to fighting stance, completing a 360° turn.



Spinning whip kick is a knockout technique, but it requires great skill and a superior sense of timing to make it work. For maximum effectiveness, make this a compact kick with a stable axis.

Jumping Back Kick

This version of jumping back kick requires you to jump with both feet at the same time. You can jump in place or slightly forward, but in either case, chamber both knees simultaneously while turning your body in the air. Align the side of your torso, the side of your legs, and the blade of your kicking foot with the target on impact. Keep your other leg tucked in close to your kicking knee for balance and power. Your arms should be close to your torso at all times. Land in fighting stance.



In step sparring, the targets for jumping back kick are the solar plexus, chest, neck or head.

Precision, timing and balance are the keys to hitting the target successfully. Depending on the distance between you and your partner, you can use a short kick or a fully extended kick.

Footwork

Step Back

From fighting stance, begin to rotate your hip and torso to the rear as you pivot on your rear foot and slide your front foot toward your rear foot. Your

front foot passes close by your rear foot, taking a full step backward. As you step back, coordinate your total body movement with your foot movement. Try to maintain the same height as you step, rather than bobbing up and down. Keeping your knees bent will make this easier. After stepping back, you will be in the opposite stance as the one you began in.





In step sparring, stepping back is used to neutralize your partner's attack by controlling the distance, creating space, or evading his technique. While you are moving, you can throw a front hand strike to the face or a front leg kick to a middle or low section target. You can also throw a rear hand punch or rear leg kick immediately after stepping back. If you plan to use a rear side

technique, step back quickly and lightly without over committing. To do this, leave your weight more on your pivoting leg throughout the movement.

Slide Back

From fighting stance, draw your hip backward and let your feet naturally follow in a sliding motion. Try to move your whole body as a single unit. As you slide, your feet should barely leave the floor and the height of your head shouldn't change. Keep your knees bent and stay light on your feet. After sliding back, you will be in the same stance as the one you began in.



Sliding back is the most instinctive response to a lunging or stepping opponent. Do not overreact; instead use multiple short slides if necessary

to fine-tune the optimal distance for your counterattack. Generally it's better to leave your weight on your front leg so your rear leg free to counter forcefully or to pivot and change direction quickly. For example, if your partner attacks and lands in closed stance, you can use a back kick counter after sliding back. If he lands in open stance, you can easily throw a rear leg roundhouse kick instead. Sliding back can be combined with other types of footwork (i.e. slide back and side step), to create the angle you are looking for.

Slide Back and Evade

From fighting stance, draw your hip backward and let your feet naturally follow in a sliding motion. As you slide, your feet should barely leave the floor. As you reach your new position, bend your legs and lower your body slightly, while leaning your upper body and head away from your partner's striking weapon. After sliding back, you will be in the same stance as the one you began in.





In step sparring, sliding back and evading is used when sliding back alone does not create enough distance between you and your partner's strike or kick. In this case, you have to shift your bodyweight to your rear foot almost entirely, rather than leaving your weight forward to counterattack immediately. With your weight on your back leg, you can still use a kicking counterattack, however, you may have to slide your

front foot back while kicking with your rear leg. This type of counter is most

effective if you can throw it before your partner sets his kicking leg down. When leaning back to evade, be careful not to lean so far that you lose your balance and fall or stumble backward.

Slide 45°

From fighting stance, first move your rear foot to a 45° angle to the side or diagonally to the rear. Your front foot should follow the rear foot until you achieve a normal fighting stance. As you slide, your feet should barely

leave the floor and the height of your head shouldn't change. Wherever you slide to, you should still be facing your opponent. After sliding 45° , you will be in the same stance as the one you began in.





In step sparring, sliding 45° is used to create an angle from which you can strike your partner's flank. It is especially useful against a taller partner who has a longer reach and tries to back you up. Instead of moving backward, move to the side and let him pass you, then counterattack using this advantageous new position that you have created. This is an unconventional tactic and requires

practice, because the instinctive response to an attack is to move straight backward.

Other Skills

Arm Bar

To apply an arm bar, grab your partner's wrist and raise it over your shoulder with his palm facing upward while rotating your body against his. Lower your body by bending your knees as you step under his arm. Position your hip on his thigh and press your back against his flank. Place his elbow or triceps area on your shoulder and pull downward

with both hands as you stand up against his arm. Keep your partner's arm straight throughout the technique.





In step sparring, the arm bar is used as a transitional or finishing technique. It is more effective if you are taller than your partner. If you are shorter than your partner, you can create the same effect by pulling down on the arm and then pulling it across your body, using your neck as well as your shoulder to bar the elbow.

CAUTION: Use control when practicing this technique, because it is easy to hyperextend the elbow joint or injure the shoulder when applying an arm bar.

Sweep Takedown

To sweep your partner, grab two high section anchor points, such as the shoulder and wrist or neck and upper arm. Once you have anchors, unbalance him by sweeping your calf behind his knee. Take him down by rotating him slightly around your body, pulling with your hands while sweeping with your leg in the opposite direction.





In step sparring, a sweep takedown is used to change the level of combat from standing to ground. Taking your partner down gives you a significant positional advantage and creates openings for a new set of possible counterattacks.

CAUTION: Practice takedowns only with partners who are skilled in falling and support your partner on the way down to prevent head, wrist

and back injuries.

Wrist Lock

To perform a basic wrist lock, grasp your partner's wrist with both hands. His arm should be rotated inward until the palm faces upward and his elbow is toward the ceiling. Grab with your fingers wrapped around his wrist and your thumbs (facing upward) pressing the back of his hand. Once you have your grip established, move backward and draw him toward you, using the wrist lock to force his body downward.

By applying downward pressure with your thumbs while squeezing your

fingers toward you, you can control the amount of pressure and pain caused by the lock. It is important to keep his hand close to you and maintain the outstretched arm so he cannot approach you to counterattack.





In step sparring, the wrist lock is a transition technique that allows you to gather yourself and control your partner in preparation for a kick or takedown. Be alert to the possibility that your partner may be able to kick you with his front leg or try to spin out of the lock.

Vertical Punch

When your partner is on the ground after a throw or takedown, control his body with your knee while delivering a vertical punch. Chamber the punch near your shoulder and then drop your body weight with the punch.

CAUTION: Never strike a partner who is on the ground because the added resistance of the ground can make a strike like this potentially fatal. Use good control in practice and perform only simulated strikes without making contact.



In step sparring, the vertical punch is a finishing technique, which follows a takedown or sweep. The targets include the temple, mandibular joint, neck, or rib cage. For demonstration effect or to simulate added power,

you can jump with both feet and deliver the punch as you land.

Vertical Roundhouse Kick

CAUTION: Never strike a partner who is on the ground because the added resistance of the ground can make the vertical roundhouse kick potentially fatal. Use good control in practice and perform only simulated kicks without making contact.

When your partner is on the ground after a throw or takedown, drop to one knee and place both hands on the ground for support as you throw a roundhouse kick in a downward direction. Chamber your knee high by

opening your hip.



The vertical roundhouse kick is an advanced technique which requires precision and absolute control. Before you practice with a partner,

practice with a heavy bag or soft target to learn how to accurately stop your kick prior to impact. Also, be alert to the possibility of your partner moving, which could inadvertently result in your kicking him or kicking the floor, resulting in a serious injury.

Ground Back Kick

Lower your body and then drop to one knee while you spin. Place both hands on the floor for balance and kick upward into the largest available target (lower stomach, solar plexus, groin).



Align your body with your leg and keep your head as far from your partner as possible. Strike with the blade of your foot.



The ground back kick is used against a rushing opponent or when you have been knocked to the ground. It is a defensive movement that is psychologically intimidating to an opponent and can help you recover from a bad situation. This kick needs to be done quickly and decisively, so that it is a single action—drop, spin and kick simultaneously. If you miss the target, roll forward and stand up

as quickly as possible.

STEP SPARRING for Beginners

Inside Block & Middle Punch

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low

block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step 45° to the left with the left leg into horseriding stance, left inside palm pressing block to the attacker's forearm.



Reverse view



4. Defender: Pivot on the left leg, shifting your weight to the left leg while executing a right middle punch to the rib cage.



Reverse view



Correct Distance

If you and your partner began at the correct starting distance, when the attacker steps forward to punch, his punch should land within a few inches of the defender's chest (right), if the defender does not move from ready stance. If the attacker's punch lands too close to or too far from the defender's chest, adjust your starting distance and try again.



Outside Block & Middle Punch

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step 45° to the right with the right leg into modified front stance, left outside knifehand block to the attacker's forearm. Your weight should be mostly in the right leg and the upper body should be inclined away from the punch as shown in the reverse view.



Reverse view



4. Defender: Shift your weight to the left into horseriding stance while

executing a right middle punch to the solar plexus.



Reverse view



Variation

Instead of pulling your left fist to your waist in the traditional manner, you can maintain the left knifehand block while punching with the right hand.



Inside Block & High Punch

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch.

Defender: As the attacker punches, step 45° to the left with the left leg into horseriding stance, left inside palm pressing block to the attacker's forearm, directing the punch away from your centerline.



Reverse view



4. Defender: Pivot on the left leg, shifting your weight to the left leg into left front stance while executing a right high punch to the jaw.



Reverse view



Shifting your Weight

Shifting your weight between the blocking and counterattacking phase of the technique creates more power in your punch.

Shift your weight smoothly by pivoting in place and moving your torso and hips as one unit.

Inside Block, Elbow Strike & Front Kick

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch.

Defender: As the attacker punches, step back with the left leg into left back stance, right inside middle block to the attacker's forearm.



4. Defender: Quickly grasp the attacker's right wrist with your left hand while shifting your weight

forward and executing a right elbow strike to the jaw. As you shift forward, slide your left foot forward and push your hips into the strike to create more power.



5. Defender: As you withdraw your right arm from the elbow strike, grab the attacker's wrist with your right hand and turn it clockwise while sliding your left hand to the

underside of the wrist.



6. Defender: When your grip is established, step back with your right foot into walking stance, extending the attacker's arm to lock the wrist.



See the close-up for a better view of the grip.



7. Defender: Maintaining the wrist lock and arm extension, execute a right front kick to the face or chest. See the reverse view at right for a

better view of the foot placement of
the kick.



Reverse view



Steps 3 through 7 should be

executed as smoothly and quickly as possible.

Outside Block, Roundhouse Kick & High Punch

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right

leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step forward 45° with the left leg into left front stance, right outside knifehand middle block to the attacker's forearm. As you block, rotate your torso away from

the line of the punch and place most of your weight in your left leg.



As you block, prepare to grab the forearm with your right hand in step 4.



4. Defender: Quickly grasp the attacker's right wrist with your right hand while simultaneously executing a right roundhouse kick to the attacker's midsection. Lean your body away from the attacker as you kick.



Reverse view



5. Defender: Immediately following your kick, set your right foot down in front stance and execute a left high punch to the head, using your momentum to create power in the punch.



Reverse view



Momentum

The order of movements in many step sparring techniques can help you learn how to create momentum in your combinations and how to use that momentum to increase the power of your techniques.

Inside Block,

Knifehand Strike & Side Kick

This technique is one of the most traditional step-sparring techniques in this book. Once you master the angles of the techniques, you can modify the footwork to a less formal and more practical arrangement.

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch.

Defender: As the attacker punches, step back with the left leg into left back stance, right inside middle knifehand block to the attacker's

forearm.



4. Defender: Immediately bring your left leg to meet your right leg and grab the attacker's right wrist with your left hand while executing a right knifehand strike to the temple.



5-6-7. Defender: Slide back with your left leg to chamber your right leg (5), then execute a right leg side kick to the rib cage (6) and set your right foot down (7), preparing to pivot on your right foot for step 8. This is a traditional Taekwondo side kick chamber. You can substitute a faster, less formal kick once you have mastered the traditional style.





8. Defender: Step your left foot 45° to the left into horseriding stance, executing the first (left hand) punch of a double punch.



9. Defender: In horseriding stance,

execute the second (right) punch. As you punch, rotate your hips counterclockwise into the punch.



Parry, Backfist, Elbow, Backfist, Spin & Elbow Strike

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step forward with your right leg into right front stance and execute a right knifehand strike to the temple while parrying the attacker's punch with left knifehand block.



4. Defender: Pivot counterclockwise

on both feet and grab the attacker's wrist or sleeve to raise his arm, exposing the rib cage. Simultaneously execute a right side elbow strike.



5. Defender: Maintaining your grip on the attacker's wrist, quickly execute a right backfist strike to the nose.



6. Defender: Press the attacker's arm downward and then upward to spin under his arm as you pivot clockwise on your left foot until you are back to back with the attacker. Keep his arm upraised. (reverse view)



7. Defender: Pull the attacker's right arm over your shoulder in an arm bar, while chambering your right arm for a rear elbow strike. Use your hips to help hold the attacker in place.



8. Defender: Execute a right rear elbow strike to the attacker's kidney while continuing to pull downward on his arm.



9. Defender: Release the attacker's arm while simultaneously hooking your right leg backward across the attacker's rear knee to take him down.



Inside Block & Triple Punches

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step to the left with the left leg into horseriding stance, and execute a left inside pressing block.



4. Defender: Pivot on the left foot into left front stance, right middle punch to the attacker's rib cage.

Rotate your torso and hips into the punch to create power for both this punch and the second punch.



5. Defender: Pivot to the right, shifting your weight to your right leg, while executing a left middle punch to the same place on the attacker's rib cage.



6. Defender: Pivot back to your left, shifting your weight back to your left leg, while executing a right high punch to the attacker's temple.



Multiple punches

For maximum impact, rotate your torso and hips into the each punch while shifting your weight to the leg opposite of your punching hand.

A skilled Taekwondo student should be able to complete two or three successive punches in one second.

Horseriding stance

Horseriding stance has traditionally been used in step sparring techniques and training drills because it is a powerful, neutral stance that develops balance and leg strength.

However, in sparring or self-defense situations, horseriding stance is neither practical nor safe.

Outside Block, Front Kick & Knifehand Strike

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step forward 45° with the left leg into left front stance, right outside knifehand middle block to the attacker's forearm. As you block, rotate your torso away from the line of the punch and shift your weight to your left leg.



4. Defender: Immediately grab the

attacker's arm and chamber a right front kick. You can grab high on the attacker's biceps and pull him toward the kick as shown above or grab the forearm and kick as in step 5.



5. Defender: As you execute a right front pushing kick to the floating rib, keep hold of the attacker's arm to expose his ribs and prevent him from evading your kick.



6. Defender: Set your right foot down inside the attacker's right foot and execute a left downward knifehand strike to the neck or jaw while keeping hold of the attacker's arm.



Reverse view



Hold and Kick

Holding the attacker's arm while you

kick prevents the attacker from evading your kick.

This is a skill that you can easily transfer to a self-defense

situation. If possible, use an assailant's limbs, head or clothing as "handles" to secure his position while you counterattack.

In a Taekwondo sparring match, however, holding your opponent is against the rules and can result in a penalty.

Knifehand Block & High Punch

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, chamber both hands on the right side of your chest. Note: This step is shown only for illustration purposes. Steps 3 and 4 should be completed as the attacker punches.



4. Defender: Step to the right with

your right foot into horseriding stance while simultaneously executing a left knifehand block and a right high punch to the chin.



Variations

Here are three examples of variations on one technique. As you can see, it is easy to create many variations on a technique based on

your skill level, body type and areas of interest.

Once you learn a step sparring technique, experiment with your own variations.

VARIATION #1:

Defender: Step to the right with your right foot into horseriding stance and then pivot to your left while simultaneously executing a left knifehand block and a right ridge knifehand strike to the back of the neck.



VARIATION #2:

Defender: Step to the right with your right foot into horseriding stance, evading the punch while simultaneously executing a right backfist strike to the nose.



VARIATION #3:

Defender: Step to the right with your right foot into horseriding stance while simultaneously executing a left knifehand block and a right knifehand strike to the neck.



Fighting Stance & Single Kick

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch. Defender: Step back with your right foot into right fighting stance.



4. Defender: Chamber your right front kick.



5. Defender: Execute a right high section front kick.



VARIATION #1:

Defender: From right fighting stance, execute a right high section roundhouse kick.



VARIATION #2:

Defender: From right fighting stance, execute a right high section side kick.



Distance control

Depending on how long your kick is, you may need to step back farther than shown in step 3. If you can kick at the height of your partner's head, simply stepping back into fighting

stance will work. If you want to kick the chest or torso, step back and then slide back before kicking to create more distance.

INTERMEDIATE STEP SPARRING

Simultaneous Parry & Punch, Backfist & Elbow Strike

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: Step forward 45° to the left with your left foot into left front stance while simultaneously parrying the attacker's punch with your left palm

and throwing a right middle punch to the attacker's rib cage. As you counterattack, lean your head to the left to evade the attacker's punch.



Reverse view



4. Defender: Draw your right leg in

slightly to close the distance with the attacker and immediately execute a right backfist to the temple, using your shoulder and upper arm to deflect the attacker's arm. Keep your left hand raised and in position for step 5.



Reverse view



5. Defender: Stand up and shift your weight to your right leg as you execute a left elbow strike to the temple. Use your right hand to hook and control the attacker's arm.



Reverse view



Timing

Although the counterattacking movements in each technique are pictured individually, they should be performed as one smooth combination. For example, advanced students should complete the parry, punch, backfist and elbow strike in this technique as a single flowing movement within 1 or 2 seconds.

Inside Block, Ridge Knifehand Strike, Elbow Strike & Elbow Strike

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low

block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step to the left with the left leg into horseriding stance, left inside palm pressing block.



4. Defender: Pivot on the left foot into left front stance, right ridge knifehand strike to the solar plexus.



Reverse view



5. Defender: Keep your left hand raised to guard your face while you retract your right hand to prepare for the elbow strike in step 6. As you retract your hand, raise your center of gravity to create more power in the elbow strike.



6. Defender: Dropping your weight down and into the attacker, prepare to execute an augmented elbow strike by placing your left palm on your right fist. Augmenting the elbow strike with a push can make your strike more powerful.



7. Defender: Continue dropping and shifting your weight as you execute an augmented elbow strike to the rib cage. This elbow strike has a hooking

path that is enhanced by the movement of your hips and torso.



8. Defender: Pivot and shift your weight to the right, left elbow strike to the mandibular joint.



Reverse view



Inside Block, Spinning Elbow Strike, Spin Back & Roundhouse Kick

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: Step back with your right foot into right back stance, left inside block to your attacker's forearm.



4. Defender: Pivoting on you the left foot, move your right leg, spin 180° clockwise into horseriding stance and execute an augmented right rear

elbow strike.



Option:

In steps 5 and 6, the attacker can move into fighting stance. In this case, the defender will need to adjust the distance for his kick according to whether the attacker moves forward or backward into fighting stance.

5. Defender: Pivot your left foot, move your right leg, and spin back 180° counterclockwise into fighting stance with your hands in guard position. The spin in this step simulates escaping from a counterattack. For example, the attacker can improvise a grab in step 4 and you can spin away from him in step 5.



6. Defender: Execute a right roundhouse kick to the attacker's midsection.



Reverse view



Augmented strike

If you practice Taekwondo poomsae, you are familiar with augmented strikes. An augmented strike takes advantage of the free hand to add power to the striking arm. For example, when performing an augmented elbow strike in step 4, using your free hand to push the fist of your striking arm not only adds the power of the push, but it also enhances the torque of your upper body by unifying the movement of your torso toward a single target.

Outside Block, Front

Kick, Backfist, & Knifehand Strike

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step forward 45° with the left leg into left front stance, right outside knifehand middle block to the attacker's forearm. As you block, rotate your torso away from the line of the punch and your weight to your left leg.



4. Defender: With your right hand, grab the attacker's wrist while throwing a right front kick to the attacker's floating rib.



5-6-7. Defender: In one smooth movement, after kicking, bring your left palm to the attacker's elbow (5), pressing it downward in an armbar (6) and then delivering a left backfist to the face (7).



Reverse view



8. Defender: Step forward with your left foot and press his elbow with your left hand. Quickly turn 180° counterclockwise, pivoting on your left foot, and grab his wrist with your left hand. Press his elbow firmly on your left thigh.



9. Defender: Stand up (or jump up) and raise your right hand to prepare for the knifehand strike in step 10. Continue to maintain control of the attacker's arm.



Reverse view



10. Defender: Drop to your right knee to deliver the power of your bodyweight in a right knifehand strike to the attacker's triceps.



Inside Block, Turning Elbow Break, & Knifehand Strike

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low

block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step back with the right leg into right back stance, left inside knifehand middle block to the attacker's forearm.



4. Defender: Grab the attacker's wrist with both hands as shown and spin clockwise under the attacker's arm, pulling the elbow down on your shoulder.





5. Defender: Continue pulling the attacker's arm downward as you stand up slightly and push your hips backward into the attacker's thigh. Use caution in this movement so you don't injure your partner's arm.



6. Defender: Resume spinning clockwise under the attacker's arm, stepping with your right foot into left walking stance. Crank the opponent's wrist outward with your left hand, keeping his hand as close to your belt area as possible for control. Note how the outward angle of the arm is already forcing the attacker to fall

backward.



7. Defender: As you complete your spin, execute a right knifehand strike to the temple while continuing cranking the attacker's arm outward

to take him down.





Key Point:

Establish your left hand grip on the attacker's wrist between step 3 and step 4 and don't let go until the technique is completed. The closer you can keep the attacker's hand and wrist to your body, the better control you will have during the transitions.

Slide Back, Front

Kick, Palm Strike, Punch, Take Down & Punch

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: Slide your left foot back into right fighting stance.



4. Defender: Execute a right front kick to the attacker's floating rib.



5. Defender: Set your left foot down

in a modified horseriding stance, left palm strike to the attacker's right elbow.



6. Defender: Shift your weight forward to left front stance, right high punch to the jaw.



7. Defender: Immediately swing your right leg forward and hook it behind the attacker's right knee while grabbing the attacker's right shoulder with your right hand.



8. Defender: Continue sweeping your right leg behind the attacker's right knee to take him down. For safety, you can support your partner's back as he falls.



9. Defender: When the attacker lands, lower your stance and prepare to punch.



10. Defender: Continue lowering your stance as you execute a right vertical punch to the jaw. Use good control and never strike the head or face of a training partner who is on the ground.



Outside & Inside Crescent Kick

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: In place, execute a left outside crescent kick to the punching hand, knocking it away. After kicking, drop your left foot in right fighting stance.



4. Defender: Immediately execute a right inside crescent kick to the face.



5. Defender: Follow through with your kick, sweeping it across the attacker's centerline.



6. Defender: Step down into left fighting stance and slide back away from the attacker.



The defender

As you become more advanced in your practice, the partner who is playing the defender's role can react more realistically as the defender in this sequence does. Always use care when reacting realistically so that neither partner is injured.

Inside Block, Spinning Elbow Strike, Spin & Take down

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: Step back with your left foot into left back stance, right inside middle block to the attacker's forearm.



4. Defender: Pivoting on your right foot, spin counterclockwise to execute a left rear augmented elbow strike to the attacker's solar plexus.



Reverse view



5. Defender: Pivoting on your left foot, spin clockwise, staying inside the attacker's arm. As you spin, grab

the attacker's wrist and shoulder and sweep the attacker's right leg with your right leg.



6. Defender: Sweep through behind the attacker's knee as you take him down. You can support your partner by holding on to his shoulder and wrist as he falls.



7. Defender: As the attacker falls, throw a right vertical punch to the jaw. Use caution when striking at a falling partner, since he may be disoriented and unable to react.



8. Defender: Begin rotating the attacker's arm to roll him. Depending on how he lands, you may need to step or slide to turn him over. Keep the attacker's arm outstretched and his hand close to your body.



9. Defender: Once the attacker is on his stomach, straighten his arm and hug it to your chest while applying light pressure to his head with your left knee and to his back with your

right knee.



10. Defender: Use your right hand to pull down on the attacker's fingers, locking his wrist as you hold his arm straight.



Inside Block & Middle Punch

1. Attacker (right): Begin in ready stance. Defender (left): Begin in ready stance, natural stance or right fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into left fighting stance, right high punch. Defender: Step 45°

to the right with the right foot into right back stance, left inside knifehand block to the attacker's forearm.



3. Defender: Slide your left foot into left front stance as you lift the attacker's arm out of the way and simultaneously throw a right high punch to the attacker's chin.



4. Defender: Bring your right hand up behind the attacker's forearm and rotate his arm clockwise downward, grabbing his forearm with both hands and pulling him toward you.



5. Defender: From the grip you established in step 4, execute a right roundhouse kick to the stomach. By pulling the attacker's arm close to your midsection, you expose a vulnerable target while increasing the power of your kick.



Stance

As you master the concept of distance in step sparring, you can vary your stance from the traditional front, horseriding and back stances.

Experiment with the width and height of your stance as well as your foot placement to find the stances that work best for you in each technique.

Ideally, you should only set in your stance at the moment of impact of each strike. As you transition between strikes, your stance should be fluid.

**Knifehand Block,
Roundhouse Kick, &**

Axe Kick

1. Face each other in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Pivoting on the left foot, move the right foot and spin 180° clockwise, throwing a right spinning knifehand strike.

Defender: Step 45° to the left with the left foot into left front stance, right outside knifehand block to the attacker's forearm.



3. Defender: Grab the attacker's right wrist with your right hand and pull downward and toward you as you execute a right roundhouse kick to the abdomen.



4. Defender: Keep a grip on the attacker's wrist while setting your foot down outside of the attacker's right foot in left front stance. Note

the angle and position of the defender's right foot in preparation for the axe kick in step 5.



5. Defender: Maintaining your hold on the attacker's wrist, execute a right leg axe kick to the back of the attacker's head. Caution: In practice, never strike a partner in the back of the head. Instead, pass your kick above his head (to your right side).



Multiple kicks

In a technique with a same leg multiple kick combination, you should set your kicking foot down only as long as it takes to secure your balance and then immediately execute the second kick.

In step 4, at left, the front stance shown is for learning purposes. Once

you can perform both kicks in a smooth sequence, you can simply set the ball of your foot down briefly between kicks.

Outside Crescent Kick & Front Kick

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right

leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch. Defender: Execute a left outside crescent kick to the attacker's wrist.



4. Defender: Set your left foot down and immediately execute a right front kick to the face.



Variations

After deflecting the attacker's arm with an outside crescent kick, you can use any kick as a follow-up, including the roundhouse kick, whip kick or side kick shown in the variations at right.

Alternate which kick you use as the second in the combination to practice transitioning between kicks in preparation for free sparring.

Variation: roundhouse kick



Variation: whip kick



Variation: side kick



Inside Crescent Kick & Side Kick

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right

leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch. Defender: Execute a right inside crescent kick to the attacker's forearm to knock it off the centerline.



4. Defender: Immediately execute a right leg side kick to the face. At first, set the right foot down between kicks. At the advanced level, throw both kicks without setting the right foot down. Simply chamber the knee between kicks.



Single leg kicks

When performing multiple kicks with the same leg, you can experiment with executing both kicks before setting your leg down. To do this, execute the first kick, retract your foot, chamber your knee for the second kick and then perform the second kick. While this is an advanced method of improving body

control and balance, it is not practical for real-life applications.

Inside Crescent Kick & Hopping Roundhouse Kick

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right leg into left front stance, left low

block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch. Defender: Execute a right inside crescent kick to the attacker's forearm to knock it off the centerline.



4. Defender: Before setting your right leg down, immediately raise your left leg to begin a hopping right roundhouse kick.



5. Defender: Complete the hopping right roundhouse kick to the abdomen as or before your left foot lands.



Hop kicks

When a high section kick is immediately followed by a jumping or hopping kick, avoid putting too much power into the high kick. If your high kick is too powerful, you will lose your balance, making the second kick hard to execute correctly.

Stay light on your feet and use the momentum of the first kick to initiate the jump or hop for the second kick.

Step Back, Back Kick, Backfist & Punch

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right

leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right middle punch. Defender: Step back with the right foot into right fighting stance.



4. Defender: Begin the back kick by pivoting on your left foot and looking over your right shoulder. (This step shown for illustration only.)



5. Defender: Execute a right leg back

kick to the solar plexus or neck.
Note: Steps 3, 4 and 5 should be completed in one smooth movement.



6. Defender: Step down into horseriding stance and execute a right backfist to the face, shifting your weight toward your right leg to put more power into the strike.



7. Defender: Pivot into right front stance, executing a left middle punch to the rib cage.



Inside Block, Throw & High Punch

1. Attacker: Begin in right fighting stance. Defender: Begin in left fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Slide forward, right middle section side kick. Defender: Hook your right hand under the attacker's kicking leg while

simultaneously pressing his right arm with your left palm.



3. Defender: Raise the attacker's kicking leg with your right forearm while pushing his upper body forward and away from you with your left hand. Note the position of the defender's left foot, right behind the attacker's left foot.



4. Defender: Continue raising the attacker's kicking leg while pushing his upper body downward with your left hand. As the attacker falls away from you, continue to shift your weight toward the attacker.



5. Defender: Complete the throw. Ideally the attacker should land face down as shown, however, due to the fluid nature of this technique, he may land on his side or back.



6. Defender: Once the attacker is down, step over him into left front stance while executing a right vertical punch to his torso. Caution: Never strike a downed partner in practice.



Defender: Rather than throwing the attacker down flat on his body, you may roll him over. If the attacker is taller than you are, it will be easier to throw him flat. If he is shorter, it will be easier to roll him over.



Be adaptable

Although step sparring is an arranged practice activity, as you advance in skill, your partner should react more naturally. This may sometimes result in unexpected outcomes, such as the variation shown at left. Be ready to adapt your response to your partner's reaction and improvise when necessary.

Step sparring is arranged practice, but it doesn't have to be rigid.

Two-step sparring

Two-step sparring is a more advanced type of step sparring. In a traditional two-step sparring technique, the attacker moves forward two steps as shown here, executing one punch with each step.

Two Step Sparring #1

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the left leg into right front stance, right low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the

left leg into left front stance, left high punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step backward with the left leg into right front stance, right outside knifehand block to the attacker's left forearm.



4. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step backward with the right leg into right back

stance, right inside palm pressing block to the attacker's right forearm.



5. Defender: Shift your weight into left front stance and execute a right middle punch to the attacker's solar plexus.



Two Step Sparring #2

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the left leg into right front stance, right low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the

left leg into left front stance, left high punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step backward with the left leg into right front stance, right outside knifehand block to the attacker's left forearm.



4. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, pivot into modified horseriding stance with your weight

shifted to the left. Parry the attacker's punch with your left hand while chambering your right arm for the elbow strike.



5. Defender: Grasp the attacker's right wrist with your left hand while executing an elbow strike to the solar plexus.



6. Defender: Shift your weight into horseriding stance and execute a right backfist to the nose.



7. Defender: Immediately follow your backfist with a left middle punch to the solar plexus.



Angles

In a two-step sparring technique, the defender can either step backward or move to the side to maintain the proper distance while blocking and striking.

Technique #1 (pages 120-121) uses 2 backward steps to control the distance between partners while this technique launches the defense from the attacker's side.

Three Step Sparring #1

1. Face each other in ready stance.



2. Attacker: Step back with the right

leg into left front stance, left low block.



3. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step backward with the right leg into right back stance, left outside knifehand block to the right forearm.



4. Attacker: Step forward with the left leg into left front stance, left high punch. Defender: As the attacker punches, step backward with the left leg into left back stance, right outside knifehand block to the left forearm.



5. Attacker: Step forward with the right leg into right front stance, right high punch.

Defender: As the attacker punches, step backward with your right foot and execute a left side kick to the midsection.



6. Defender: Before setting your left foot down, execute a right jumping back kick to the chest. The side kick in step 5 is used to set-up the 360° back kick that is completed here.



360° Back kick

The 360° back kick is a combination of a short quick side kick followed immediately by a jumping back kick that is executed before the side kicking foot returns to the ground.

The side kick should be short and quick, using minimal power. The real impact of the technique is delivered

by the back kick.

Force control

As you progress in your step sparring practice, you will understand more about how to vary the amount of force in your techniques and how that changes your performance capacity. Use a short light kick followed by a long powerful kick or a long light kick followed by a short powerful kick, depending on the distance between you and your partner at the time.

ADVANCED STEP SPARRING

Slide Back, Roundhouse Kick & Back Kick

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Right leg roundhouse

kick. Defender: Slide 45° backward and either sweep the kick away with a left low block (above) or simply slide back and evade the kick (below, reverse view) depending on how close and how tall the attacker is.



Reverse view



3. Defender: As soon as the attacker sets his kicking foot down, execute a right leg roundhouse kick to the abdomen.



Reverse view



4. Defender: Immediately execute a left leg back kick to the abdomen.



Reverse view



Fighting stance

When you begin from fighting stance, the way you execute each technique can vary depending on how tall your training partner is, how he or she executes the initial attack and how he or she reacts to your kicks.

Practice with a variety of partners to gain an understanding of how distance, footwork, and angles can change the way you need to execute each step in the technique.

Back Kick, Roundhouse Kick & Punch

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Slide in, left leg roundhouse kick. Defender: Slide 45° backward to evade the kick.



3. Defender: Immediately execute a right back kick to the belt area. This can be done simultaneous to the attacker's roundhouse kick or after the attacker drops his kicking foot.



Reverse view



4. Defender: Immediately follow the back kick with a left roundhouse kick to the abdomen if the attacker remains upright or to the chest if he is bending over in reaction to your back kick.



5. Defender: Finish with a right high punch to the temple.



Punching

In a step-sparring technique that simulates a sparring exchange such as this one, you can adapt the skills according to the rules of the sparring style you practice.

If your style prohibits punching to the

face, you can modify step 5 (far right) to a punch to the chest or flank.

Block, Roundhouse Kick & Double Kicks

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Right leg roundhouse kick. Defender: In-place left low block to the attacker's right shin.



3. Defender: Immediately execute a right roundhouse kick to the abdomen.



Reverse view



4. Defender: Follow-up immediately with a left roundhouse kick to the attacker's right rear thigh. This kick is just a light touch, thrown to set-up the second roundhouse kick of the double kicks.



Reverse view



5. Defender: As soon as your left leg touches the attacker's thigh, jump up and throw a right roundhouse kick to the abdomen. The second kick should

land before or as your left foot lands. Steps 3, 4 and 5 should be done in quick succession.



Reverse view





Slide Back, Step Back, Back Kick, Roundhouse Kick & Axe Kick

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Slide in, left roundhouse kick. Defender: Slide backward.



3. Attacker: Right roundhouse kick. Defender: Step back with your left foot into left fighting stance.



4. Defender: Immediately throw a left leg back kick to the attacker's lower abdomen to push him backward as he completes his kick.



5. Defender: As the attacker moves backward, execute a right leg roundhouse kick to the attacker's abdomen.



6. Defender: Switch stance or set your right foot down in the rear (transition photo, left), then throw a right axe kick to the head.



Reverse view



Step Back, Block-Punch, Switch Stance, & Ground Back Kick

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Defender: Step backward with the left foot into left fighting stance.



3. Attacker: Right axe kick. Defender: Simultaneously execute a right middle punch to the solar plexus and

a left high block.



Reverse view



4. Defender: As the attacker completes his kick, switch stance and quickly duck down away from him.





5. Defender: Turn and execute a back kick to the abdomen from the ground as the attacker moves toward you.



Back Kick on the Ground

Kicking from the ground can be a powerful way to recover from a fall or takedown. By using the ground for support, you create two points of contact and balance, making your kick stronger. Additionally, by leaning your body away from the attacker, you simultaneously protect your vital targets and repel the attacker.

Block, Parry, & Whip kick- Roundhouse Kick

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Left roundhouse kick.

Defender: Right low block to the left shin. Caution: Parry when you block rather than meeting force with force so you do not injure your forearm.



3. Attacker: Right lunging middle punch. Defender: Right hand parry to the attacker's right forearm.



4. Defender: Grab the attacker's punching arm and throw a right leg whip kick over it.



Reverse view



5. Defender: While keeping a hold on the attacker's wrist, retract and chamber your right leg for step 6.



Reverse view



6. Defender: Immediately throw a right leg roundhouse kick to the attacker's jaw.



Reverse view



Practice Progressively

Initially, practice this kicking combination slowly while holding a stretching bar or other support to develop the large muscles groups necessary to sustain your balance for multiple single leg kicks.

High Skill - High Risk

Step sparring techniques such as the one shown here are high risk and require a high level of skill to execute

them successfully. Practice slowly and with caution until you master the fundamental movements that make up the technique.

Step Back, Roundhouse Kick & Spin Whip Kick

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Right whip kick to the head. Defender: Evade the kick.



3. Defender: Immediately step back as the kick passes your centerline.





4. Defender: Execute a left roundhouse kick to the midsection. After the kick, drop your left foot next to the attacker's left foot (transition photo, right) to begin the spinning kick.





5. Defender: Execute a right leg spinning whip kick to the head. Note the position of the defender's body in both photos. Above, the defender's pivot foot is about 18 inches from the attacker's left foot because the attacker is leaning forward. At right, the defender's pivot foot is right next to the attacker's left foot because the attacker is leaning away.



Reverse view



Step Back, Back

Kick & Jumping Back Kick

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Right roundhouse kick to the body. Defender: Step back.



3. Defender: Throw a left back kick to the abdomen.



Reverse view



4. Attacker: Throw a left roundhouse kick to the body as soon as the defender sets his kicking foot down.



5. Defender: Before the attacker finishes his left roundhouse kick, rapidly execute a right jumping back

kick to the attacker's chest.



Reverse view



Change of flow

Most kicking combinations take advantage of the flow of momentum from one kick to another.

This combination, however, reverses the momentum between the first and second back kick. The combination begins with a counterclockwise body rotation and then switches to a clockwise body rotation.

To accomplish this successfully, maintain your balance and control your body rotation speed.

Block, Ground Whip

Kick & Vertical Ground Roundhouse Kick

Caution

This technique contains a number of potentially dangerous elements:

1. When taking a partner down with a sweep or kick, always be sure your partner is skilled at falling.
2. Never strike a fallen training partner.
1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Right roundhouse kick to the body. Defender: Left low block to the attacker's right shin.



3. Defender: Drop to your left knee as you execute a right whip kick from the ground, hooking the attacker's

rear knee to take him down.



Reverse view



4. Defender: Follow through after the whip kick to chamber your right leg

for a vertical downward roundhouse kick.



5. Defender: Complete the right roundhouse kick. Caution: Do not strike your training partner.



Spin Whip Kick, Low Kick-Takedown & Punch

1. Begin in fighting stance.



2. Attacker: Right whip kick to the head. Defender: Evade the kick by leaning back.



3. Defender: Execute a right spinning whip kick to the attacker's head as

soon as he sets his kicking foot down.



Reverse view



4. Defender: After returning to right

fighting stance (transition photo, left), throw a low kick to the rear of the attacker's left knee to take him down.



Reverse view



5. Defender: When the attacker is down, slide to position yourself near his head in fighting stance.



6. Defender: Drop to your right knee as you execute a right vertical punch. Be careful not to strike your training

partner.



Create Your Own Step Sparring

Now that you have learned basic, intermediate and advanced level step sparring techniques, you can create your own step sparring techniques that fit your interests and needs. Creating your own step sparring

techniques is a good way to enhance your Taekwondo skills.

Principles

Here are some principles to help you get started:

Begin from ready stance or fighting stance. Use ready stance for classical hand techniques. Use fighting stance for kicking techniques and fluid movements.

For simple technical exchanges, use one-step sparring, and for continuous movements, use two-step or three-step sparring.

The final movement should always

be a counterattacking technique (i.e. back kick, roundhouse kick, or punch), while the movements that precede it should generally be defensive skills (i.e. block, parry, or footwork).

Vary the level of defensive and offensive skills in each combination. For example, after a low block use a middle punch, or after an outside knifehand middle block use a high section knifehand strike.

Vary the directions of defensive and offensive skills. Combine an inward block with an outward strike or an outward block with an inward strike. For example, follow an inside block

with a reverse (outward) knifehand strike, or follow an outside crescent kick with an inside crescent kick.

Use footwork to control the distance between the partners. In classical techniques, use backward steps to control the distance. Against kicking attacks, use or side stepping to adjust the distance in increments.

Control the angle of attack and defensive movements using footwork. For example, use side stepping to remove the defender from the attacker's central line of attack and position the defender at an optimal striking angle on the flank.

Use footwork to change between open and closed stance situations. By switching stance, you can create the opposite situation of the one the defender was originally in. This simple change opens up additional advantageous opportunities.

TIPS HOW TO TEACH:

Emphasize that step sparring begins with and ends with etiquette.

Teach progressively and in small increments.

Provide logical explanations so

students can remember each technique easily.

Emphasize technical perfection and control.

Safety first.

Rotate partners so students practice with a variety of sizes and skill levels.

Give time goals for each technique depending on rank.

Practice slowly to enhance understanding.

Allow time for individual practice and practice in front of a mirror.

Tradition Continues

“In the late 1970s, I often practiced versions of many of the step sparring techniques that I’ve shared with you in this book. Perhaps thirty years from now, your students and their students will still be practicing the step sparring techniques that you create today.” ~ Sang H. Kim

About the Author

Sang H. Kim is an internationally respected author of 18 martial arts books, including the best sellers Vital Point Strikes, Ultimate Flexibility, Ultimate Fitness through Martial Arts, and Teaching Martial Arts, and star of over 100 martial arts instructional

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He won the 1976 Korean National Championship and was named Instructor of the Year by the Korean government in 1983. As a special agent during his military service, he developed tactical combat methods for hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon combat for covert operatives.

To advance his education, he studied abroad in US in 1985 and has since

traveled to Europe, North and South America and Asia to present seminars on martial arts and motivational skills. He earned a BS degree in English Literature, an MS degree in Sports Science and a Ph.D. in Sports Media Studies.

He taught Taekwondo at Trinity College from 1987 to 1998 and was a technical advisor for Wesleyan University and the University of Connecticut. He has spoken on Sports Philosophy, Fighting Strategy and Motivation at Yale University, Gordonstoun School in Scotland, Brunell University in London, and private and public organizations in

Bermuda, Ireland, Korea, Spain, Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom.

He has been featured in magazines and newspapers including Black Belt, Taekwondo times, Taekwondo People, WTF Magazine, Combat, Fighter's Magazine-UK, Cumbernauld Gazette-Scotland, Delta Sky, Vitality, Bottom Line Business, Korea Herald, Donga Newspaper-Seoul, Chosun Daily-Seoul, and Choongang Central Daily-New York. His books or films have been reviewed in the Dallas Observer, Hartford Current, Worcester Telegram, El Nacional (Oklahoma), the Herald News, Inner-

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His books include Ultimate Flexibility, Vital Point Strikes, Taekwondo Self-defense, Ultimate Fitness Through Martial Arts, Teaching: the Way of The Master, Taekwondo Kyorugi, Instructor's Desk Reference, Martial Arts After 40, the Art of Harmony, Combat Strategy, Muye Dobo Tongji, and 1,001 Ways To Motivate Yourself and Others (translated in 22 languages). His DVDs include Ultimate Fitness, Ultimate Flexibility,

Self-defense Encyclopedia, Power Breathing, Beginner's Taekwondo, Martial Arts of Korea, Complete Taekwondo Series and Junsado Combat Training Series.

He developed Law Enforcement Safety & Survival programs for local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, and VIP Security programs for international agencies in the US, UK, and Canada.

He has also produced over a dozen documentaries on the international subjects including The Real Royal Trip, Ki: the Science of Energy, Zen for Martial Arts, 100 Years of Tradition for Connecticut State

Police, and Dong Ahn Geo: Zen
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